

Into the future, tinkering at the edges is no longer going to be enough.

The early childhood system is coming under increasing strain and with affordability and availability often being significant issues, unless there is a new perspective on the entire field, tensions will only continue.

With all the research to back it up and undertaken as an investment as both people now and establishing a sound foundation for individual and societal futures, I'd like to make a call for a single system of development and learning that spans across the 2 ½ / 3 to 8 years age group.

It brings together long day care, occasional care, family day care, preschools, kindergartens, playgroups, creches, infants schools, early intervention settings, parental assistance, formal schooling until about year 2/3 etc. into the one overarching system.

It is based around the child and their caregivers. It is flexible, modular and seamless; innovating the field in a number of ways.

Looking after and out for young children is a long term investment and I would imagine such a model being primarily government funded, in place of the range of funding and subsidies available now.

Some of my ideas are formed and some still mulling around. I have been drafting the foundations of such a model and the early stages are at Replacing The Map - <http://replacingthemap.com/>. I would like to think that a physical trial of a model would be possible at some stage.

At this time, my thinking is specifically in relation to the first stages of a more "formalised" learning and development pathway and does not touch on the first few years of life.

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